

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listing of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently Amended) A process for manufacturing larger leaf black tea comprising the steps of withering and macerating tea leaves in a rotovane machine, allowing them to ferment, firing the leaves to arrest fermentation and then drying and sorting them to yield black leaf tea,

the process being characterised in that the tea leaves are withered to a moisture content of between 64% and 70% before being macerated by the controlled application of both shear and compression forces sufficient to disrupt the majority of cells within the tea leaf, to introduce morphological changes in the tissue and to redistribute the cell contents, all of which leads to fermentation and infusion typical of CTC teas, whilst maintaining the appearance of orthodox tea.

2. (previously amended) A process according to claim 1 wherein the tea leaves are withered to a moisture content of between 64 and 68%.
3. (cancelled)
4. (previously amended) A process according to claim 3 wherein the dried black leaf tea is sorted to select black leaf tea of Broken Orange Pekoe grade or larger.
5. (original) A process according to claim 1 wherein the withered leaves are macerated by being passed through a rotorvane machine in which at least some of the vanes have been replaced by reverse facing vanes.

6. (previously amended) A process according to claim 4 wherein the dried black leaf tea is sorted to select black leaf tea of Broken Orange Pekoe grade or larger.
7. (currently amended) A process according to claim ~~3~~1 wherein the tea leaves leaving the rotorvane are further cut, diced or chopped.
8. (original) A process according to claim 7 wherein the tea leaves leaving the rotorvane are further cut by being passed through a CTC machine.
9. (original) A process according to claim 8 wherein the blade of the CTC machine has 2 to 6 teeth per inch.
- 10.(original) A process according to claim 7 wherein the dried black leaf tea is sorted to select black leaf tea of Broken Orange Pekoe grade and/or Broken Orange Pekoe Fannings grade.
- 11.(original) A process according to claim 8 wherein the dried black leaf tea is sorted to select black leaf tea of Broken Orange Pekoe grade and/or Broken Orange Pekoe Fannings grade.
- 12.(original) A process according to claim 9 wherein the dried black leaf tea is sorted to select black leaf tea of Broken Orange Pekoe grade and/or Broken Orange Pekoe Fannings grade.
- 13.(previously amended) A process according to claim 7 wherein the tea leaves leaving the rotorvane are further diced or chopped by being passed through a two dimensional belt-fed dicer with circular knives or a food processor with rotary micro-cut heads.

14.(original) A process according to claim 1 wherein the withered leaves are macerated by being passed through an extruder machine.

15.(cancelled)

16.(cancelled)